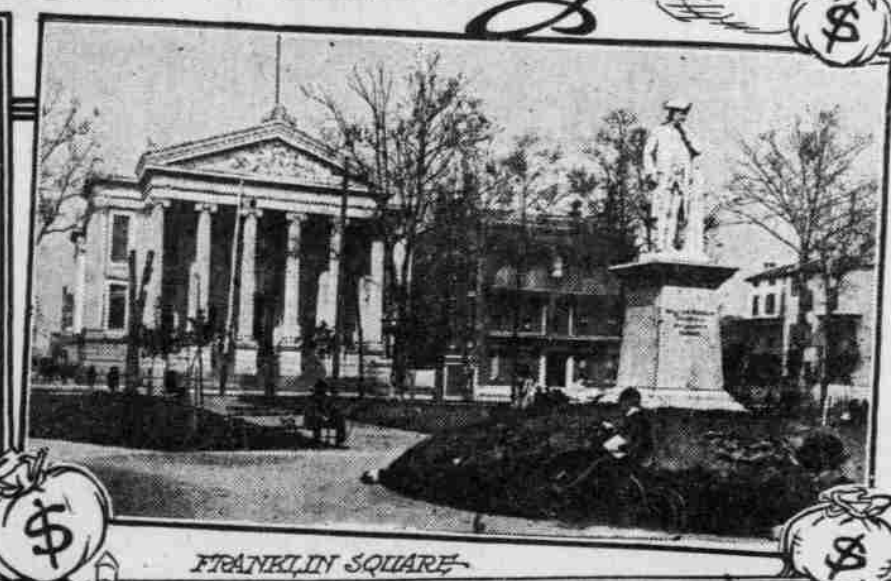
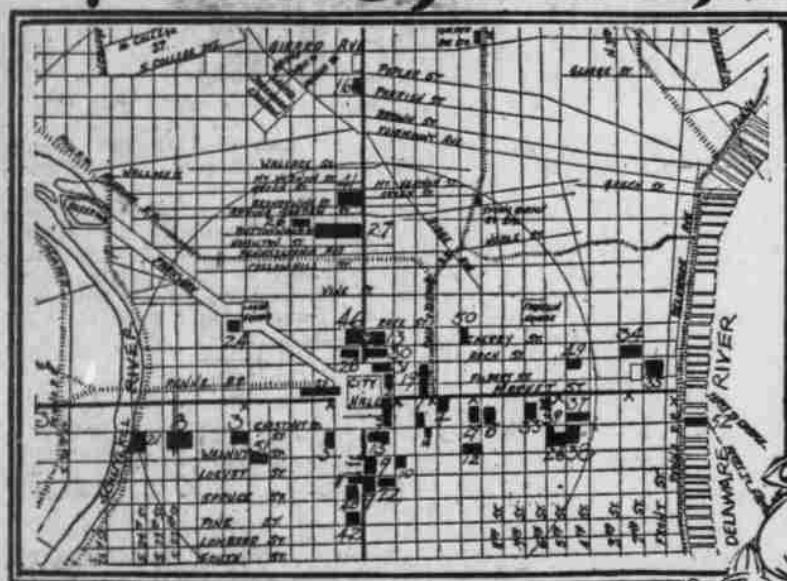


Baker Estate Noax: \$800,000,000 Mirage



HEART OF PHILADELPHIA

ALTHOUGH some may scoff at the authenticity of the rapidly growing claims of the Baker family upon the \$800,000,000 heart of Philadelphia, there is no doubt in the mind of Myron C. Baker, 900 Belmont avenue, Chicago, as to his right to benefit should the claims prove valid. He contends he is the true and legal great-grandson of the man who, it is alleged, owned the \$800,000,000 tract of real estate in the Quaker city. However, Mr. Baker is in no hurry.

"Now, if you will look on page 516 of this book," he said, taking down a copy of the "Big Graphical and Genealogical History of Indiana," "you will discover my father's name. It shows that my father's grandfather was Jacob Baker, Germany. He came to America and settled in Pennsylvania.

"It was this Jacob Baker who acquired all that property in Philadelphia. I have many papers and records and documents to prove it. There will be no trouble about connecting up my relationship. There are 17 true great-grandchildren. We will prove our heirship.

Mr. Baker said that his family several years ago collected a fund and had the entire history of Jacob Baker traced, even to his parents' estate in Germany.

"A cousin of mine has all of those records," said Mr. Baker. "They will be produced."

"If you get the money, what then?"

"Well, I have a long time to live, you know," he said. "I'll take my daughter, Emma, and her husband, and we'll have a little trip. But there's no use worrying about that now. There is no hurry."

Some of the Baker heirs are more impatient about it than Chicago's Mr. Baker. This is not natural. Inasmuch as Colonel Baker appears to have been the family head from whom sprang a multitudinous progeny. His heirs seem to be scattered through every state in the Union and every province of Canada.

One day recently the bureau of legal aid, department of public welfare of Philadelphia, according to the chief of that bureau, Roman, received eight inquiries relative to the Baker estate. In all correspondence it is represented as an estate worth more than \$800,000,000, consisting of 650 acres in the business center of Philadelphia. Some add all the land occupied by the city of Philadelphia.

The eight inquiries cited as having been received of a single recent day came, respectively, from Kansas City, Mo.; Afton, Ia.; Dubuque, Ia.; Salt Lake City, Utah; Okanagan, Wash.; Los Angeles, Cal.; Lebanon, Pa., and Tacoma, Wash. The inquiries were, indeed, some of them on embossed paper, others on mere scraps of paper.

"The great majority of persons who write to the mayor of Philadelphia or to the director of the department of public welfare relative to Colonel Baker's holdings," said Mr. Hassrick, "have visions of great wealth."

"Some are more credulous than others. Recently there came to me from Portland, Ore., an inquiry accompanied by a newspaper clipping which told of the marvelous good luck of a citizen of that town. The article spoke of his having founded an automobile school on a capital of \$750 five years ago and added, 'Today he is heir to millions.' This alleged fortune descendant of the now famous Colonel Baker did not seem to know exactly how large a slice he was to get out of this estate. But, with hope burning in his breast, he settled up his affairs in Portland and started for Philadelphia to claim the gold that he thought there awaited him.

"From Afton, Ia., came an inquiry from a person who wants to get in touch with the attorney, or attorneys, handling the 'billion-dollar Baker estate.' This is one of the highest appraisements of the value of this estate that has reached the office of the bureau.

"A western newspaper printed a general statement about this 'Baker estate' which was transmitted from the East and immediately there sprang up a retinue of claimants, with names ranging from Shrodes to Anderson, and all apparently evincing an earnest interest in the estate of Colonel Baker.

"Only the other day there came to the city a lawyer from Kansas City bent on getting the true facts relative to Colonel Baker and his vast wealth. This attorney insisted upon digging through the court records and ascertaining what are the real facts."

If the Baker estate idea is sound, Philadelphia's famed city hall, with its massive stone tower, town clock and bronze statues of its statesmen, William Penn, belongs to a thousand or more farmers of the Northwest and Canada.

Such a title as Scottish Rite Cathedral, one of the most famous homes of Free Masonry in the United States, is to provide spending money for folks out along the Pacific coast.

Broad Street Station, home terminal of the Pennsylvania railroad, is to be split up among the agriculturists of the middle West.

The Quaker city's skyscraper belt, the modern steel and concrete canyons that mark the boundaries of Broad and Chestnut streets, are in reality the property not of the few, but of the many.

The very heart of the third city of the U. S. A. belongs to the "colony." There is no Bohemianism about it—no fifty-fifty division of property. The only stipulation is that your name is Baker or that you can prove your connection with the family tree of a supposed "Colonel Jacob Baker," who roamed these parts in Revolutionary war days.

Just imagine this! Some morning soon commuters stepping off trains at Broad street station or swarming up out of the Market street subways in ye city of Brotherly Love may find lock and chain on the whole of Philadelphia's busy center. There will be "Hands Off" and "No Trespass" signs everywhere. Pretty soon the sheriff will appear. Upon a stated day he will auction off all this property at a sheriff's sale.

The proceeds are to pay off the claims of the heirs of "Colonel Jacob Baker," estate of the fortune valued at something like an even billion of dollars, long withheld from its rightful owners, is at last to come into legitimate ownership.

Ever hear of the "Baker estate" before? A quarter of a century ago someone started the ball rolling. According to the story, Colonel Baker, an officer in the army of George Washington, leased a tract of land in the heart of Philadelphia upon which now stand city hall, the big department stores, the skyscrapers and what-not of the central city. The lease was to run for a period of 99 years. It appears that the lease was either lost sight of or wilfully destroyed and the property passed on to others.

At first the claims took in nearly all the territory between the Delaware and the Schuylkill rivers and from Poplar to South street—the very heart of the city. As the years rolled on, the claims were considerably modified. Lawyers pointed out how, for a "slight consideration," they could restore the ground to its "rightful owners" and bring half the banks and trust companies of Philadelphia to their knees.

As the story developed, it seemed that the family of "Colonel Baker" removed to somewhere up in Canada, after his death in Philadelphia intestate. Then the squatters lived on the land in accordance with the famous 99-year lease made during the Revolution. Forty years ago the first talk of a "claim" was aired. There was a lapse of some 15 years and then the bubble was brought forth again to glisten in all its rainbow colors.

Now there is an old-fashioned renaissance of the Baker bubble on a scale not heretofore attained. All over the country there are expectant people just aching for the money with which to doll themselves out with limousines, trick clothes and flashing diamonds.

And there's plenty of wherewithal, so far as the value of the district in question is concerned. The map given herewith gives a hint of the values.

The city hall cost \$28,000,000; the Adelphi hotel is valued at \$2,300,000; the Ritz Carlton at \$2,200,000; and the Bellevue-Stratford close by, at \$5,000,000. There are scores of buildings with more than a million each, such as the Real Estate Trust, \$3,750,000; Widener, \$8,800,000; Lincoln, \$2,500,000; Liberty, \$2,850,000; Union League, \$3,100,000; Land Title, \$7,900,000; Morris, \$2,700,000, and Finance, \$2,300,000.

Independence hall (*) is in the district; so is Franklin square and Franklin's grave (49). Other noteworthy structures in the district are:



INDEPENDENCE HALL

1. Aldie.
2. New Birmingham.
3. Blonstone.
4. Green's.
5. Walton.
6. Rittenhouse.
7. St. James.
8. Academy of Music.
9. Walnut theater.
10. Adelphi and Lyric theaters.
11. Keith's theater.
12. Garrick theater.
13. Reading terminal.
14. Broad Street station (Penn.).
15. Betsy Ross house.
16. Historical society.
17. John Harrison Laboratory of Chemistry.
18. Academy of Natural Sciences.
19. University of Penn. museum.
20. United States mint.
21. Baldwin Locomotive works.
22. Academy of Fine Arts.
23. Central post office.
24. Old Fellows hall.
25. Masonic temple.
26. Franklin institute.
27. Betsy Ross house.
28. Christ church.
29. The Bourse.
30. Custom house.
31. Carpenter's hall.
32. Central high school.
33. Philadelphia Textile school.
34. Drexel institute.
35. Scottish Rites hall.
36. Wanamaker's theater.
37. Shubert's theater.
38. Philadelphia College of Pharmacy.
39. Philadelphia Art Alliance.
40. Chestnut street market.
41. X Subway-Elevated stations.

So you see, the Baker heirs will draw down considerable if the Philadelphia officials say of the Baker estate that "there ain't no such animal." The mayor of Philadelphia asked John S. Broadway, chief counsel of the bureau of legal aid, for a report. Here is his report:

"It appears that there was an estate of Jacob Baker, a Revolutionary veteran, handled in the Orphans' Court of Philadelphia county. The records there show that it was disposed of about 1847. The estate consisted of about \$6,000 or \$7,000, as shown by the account which is among the papers. Through some means extensive information has been spread around to the effect that a portion of this estate consists of a 99-year lease of certain real estate in the city of Philadelphia, a part of which is occupied by the present city hall, and some additional real estate on which the city of Philadelphia is situated.

"The information further is given that the real estate in Philadelphia was held under a 99-year lease, which has just expired, and that, therefore, the real estate is available for distribution among the various heirs of Jacob Baker. In consequence of this, the newspapers in various parts of the country have printed articles on the subject, stating that the estate is valued at some \$800,000,000, and that there are about 800 heirs. Consequently many people with the name of Baker are interested in obtaining a share of this estate, and we are receiving a great many letters and inquiries with reference to it.

"A search of the records fails to disclose any such lease, or any such property right, at least so far as the law in Philadelphia is concerned. The Orphans' court reports to me that they consider the whole matter a fraud and the Register of Wills' office says the same."

and hedges, trained to trellises and columns, or falling in showers over walls and railings. But nowhere are there carnations, marguerites and lilacs, together with hedges of blue and geranium and cineraria, white walls and houses are covered with multi-colored draperies of wistaria, honey-suckle, bougainvillea and numerous other creepers of every form and hue.

It is, however, in their roses that the Montevideans take their greatest pride. They are found everywhere, in private gardens and in public parks, in clumps

alternating with the native palmaria and umbra trees and the Australian eucalyptus, one finds beds of pansies, carnations, marguerites and lilacs, together with hedges of blue and geranium and cineraria, white walls and houses are covered with multi-colored draperies of wistaria, honey-suckle, bougainvillea and numerous other creepers of every form and hue.

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The Clan Call

By Hapsburg Liebe

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"I'LL STICK."

Synopsis.—Young Carlyle Wilburton Dale, or "Bill Dale," as he is known, son of a wealthy operator, John K. Dale, arrives at the Halfway Switch, in eastern Tennessee, abandoning a life of ease and incidentally a bride, Patricia Clavering, at the altar—determined to make his own way in life. He meets "Babe" Littleford, typical mountaineer, a "By" Heck, a character of the hills, takes him to John Moreland's home. Moreland is chief of his "clan," which has an old feud with the Littlefords. He tells Dale of the killing of his brother, David Moreland, years ago, owner of rich coal deposits, by a man named Carlyle. Moreland's description of "Carlyle" causes Dale to believe the man was his father. Dale arranges to make his home with the Morelands, family, for whom he entertains a deep respect. Talking with "Babe" Littleford next day, Dale is ordered by "Black Adam" Ball, bully of the district, to leave this and fight. Dale copes spiritedly, and they fight. Dale wipes the bully, though badly used up.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

When Dale came back to a state of consciousness, he was lying under covers in the carved black walnut bed. Beside him stood John Moreland, who held in one hand a bowl containing a hot herb brew that his wife had prepared. Granny Heck, her son By, and Mrs. Moreland stood not far away.

"This here'll be good for ye, I think," said Moreland, nodding toward the bowl in his hand. He went over and put an arm around Dale's shoulders and helped him to sit up.

Dale drank the stuff with difficulty. "Much obliged," he muttered thickly. "I—let's see, did I whip—where did it end? He didn't lick me, did he—that fellow Ball?"

"He shore didn't," smiled Moreland. "Not by a big sight. He fell out fast. His own paw won't hardly know him, Bill."

News travels rapidly in the big hills. The Morelands began to gather at the home of their chief to see the man who had whipped Black Adam Ball; every Moreland able to walk came to see Bill Dale. For three hours he was floundered, but he didn't enjoy it; the water had left many rashes in his chest, and his head ached, and his hands still felt as though the bones were shattered in them.

Came a thunderstorm that afternoon, and the mountain evening fell with a chill. A fire was made in the wide stone fireplace in the guest's room, and when supper was over the family gathered there with Dale, who refused to be kept in bed.

After a few minutes of silently watching grotesque shadows flit across the log walls, Dale said to John Moreland:

"Your brother David could know, don't you think he'd want you to get the value out of the coal?"

John Moreland bent forward to rest his chin in his hands. His sober grey eyes stared thoughtfully toward the fire.

"I ain't never looked at it that way," he said.

"That's the right way to look at it," declared Dale. "But you shouldn't sell the property as it is."

The mountaineer turned an inquiring face toward his guest.

"In thunder could I handle it if I didn't?"

"Why not let me develop it for you? I'll share the profits, except, if you don't charge you anything above expenses, and I take 'em as I want 'em."

"I'd take considerable money to start things a-movin'. Have you got it?" asked Moreland.

"No, but I can get it. Almost anybody would be willing to lend money on so good a thing as this, y'know?"

For a little while Moreland sat there and looked squarely at Dale, who returned his gaze without a sign of flinching. The hillman was trying to find a motive.

"How comes it at you, who ain't knowed a thing as this, y'know?" he demanded, "can be so much interested in us?"

The question demanded a straightforward answer. Dale realized that there was but one way in which he could give a satisfactory explanation, and that that was by telling the truth—but not the whole truth, as he surmised it, for then his efforts would go for naught.

Moreland was speaking again, and his eyes were brighter now.

"I agree at David would want us to develop the coal, if he could know, it's like a lightnin' bolt to me. But that you're so sacred to us, Bill Dale, and afore ye go any further I'll haf to ax ye to tell me all about it."

A city man up here in the wilderness—it don't look s'picious, Bill, mebbe, but—well, I hopes ye can pardon me for axin' it. I shore got to be kept on my toes, y'know. I've seed ye fight. You can work the coal."

He looked toward the closed inner door and called, "Oh, Addie; you and the boys can come back now."

Out of the night a face appeared at one of the small windows. It was a feminine face and handsome rather than pretty. Two slender, sunburned hands gripped the window-ledge nervously. The face pressed closer to the glass, then disappeared. Soon afterward the outer door of the guest's room opened, and Ben Littleford's daughter entered. Her skirts were dripping wet.

Mrs. Moreland arose and went toward the young woman. She knew that only something of great importance could bring a Littleford into her home in this fashion.

"What's the matter, Babe?"

Babe Littleford gave no attention to Mrs. Moreland. She went on to Bill Dale, walking softly on bare feet.

"Black Adam is a-goin' to kill you tonight, Bill Dale."

"That so? Dale's smile was rather grim. "How did you find that out, Miss Littleford?"

"I found it out all right. As he went off from the river this mornin', I made fun of him; and he patted the stock of his rifle and said he'd get you through a window. It was at our house this evenin' to help fix pap's gun, and when he left he started this way, a-goin' by the blowed-down sycamore. I waded the river at Blue Cat shoals to beat him here. I thought you might want to know about it, so I ye could mebbe save other folks the trouble o' makin' a funeral fo' ye."

She backed toward the door, her eyes never leaving Dale's face. Another second, and she was gone.

They were all on their feet now. John Moreland gripped Dale's arm.

"Over that aside of the chimney, Bill!" he ordered, his native drawl for the moment absent. "Out, Addie, honey! Luke, bring my rifle and—lunt—jump! keep! Cale, bring water and drown this here fire!"

It was done. Moreland took his hat and the repeater and went alone into the night.

When some fifteen minutes had passed, there came to Dale's ears the sound of shooting. There were ten shots in such rapid succession that they made almost a continuous roar. The echoes and reverberations, and then silence. Soon John Moreland let himself into the dark room.

His wife's voice was low and filled with anxiety:

"What happened, John?"

A dull thud came through the darkness as her husband's rifle-butts struck the floor.

"This is what happened, Addie: As I passed the cavern of the house, I got down that that old oxwip to take along. I went across the road and into the meadow, and that I seen Adam Ball a-comin'. I hid, and when Adam was about to pass me, I jumped up and jerked his rifle from him and busted it ag'in a rock. Then I lights in and thrashes him with the oxwip until he broke and run. And 'en this here happened, Addie."

"I was a-watchin' to see if Adam had reely went off, when I seed a man a-comin' toward me fast. I thought it was Ball, o' course. So I up and tells him to show me how fast he can run and commences a-shootin' over his head to skewer him. But it didn't happen to be Adam Ball—it was Ben Littleford! He was a-collerin' Babe to see what she was up to, o' course."

"How do ye know it was Ben, pap?" Cale asked.

"How do I know?" growled John Moreland. "When I got through a-shootin', he holers at me and says: 'Tomorrow, John Moreland, he says, 'we'll have a little Gettysburg o' our own! And I might mind ye, Cale, 'at he keeps his word the same as I do.'"

"And Littleford meant a—?" began Dale.

"That the'll be a big fight tomorrow," said Moreland. "Bill Dale, in a-makin' this land yer land and these people yer people, I'm a-feard ye're agoin' to git the best of it, mebbe, mebbe ye can handle. Do ye want to back out of it and let the coal go, or are ye one o' these fellers who chaws what they bites off of it's a boss's head?"

"I'll stick," Dale's voice came firmly in the darkness. "I'll stick."

CHAPTER IV

The Mystery of the Rifles.

An hour after John Moreland sent his ten rifle bullets whining over the head of Ben Littleford, every Moreland and every Littleford in the valley knew of the declaration of war. And each man of them oiled his weapons and put them in better working order.

When Dale went to bed, there was too much on his mind to render sleep easy for him. Tomorrow he would have to help in the fight against the Littlefords, kinsmen of the young woman who had saved him, without doubt, from death by the murderous rifle of the mountaineer Goliath—or break his word fairly.

He thought, too, of the everlasting wonder, the tall of John Moreland's bedtime prayer. How a man can go down on his knees and ask the blessings of the Almighty upon men whom he meant to fight the next day was a thing that Bill Dale could not understand.

It was after midnight before he slept. He woke at the break of day, arose and dressed himself, and went out. Going toward the flower-filled front yard, he found himself facing a very angry John Moreland.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Matter enough," clipped the mountaineer. "Bill Dale, I'm a-goin' to ax you a question, and I want the truth. Will I git it?"

"You'll get the truth if you get any thing. Shoot the question."

"All right. What do you know about my gun?"

"About as much as you know of the left hind wheel of Ben Hup's chariot. What's wrong with it?"

Moreland's eyes were steady and cold. He thrust his hands into the pockets of his corduroy trousers. Then his face softened a trifle, and he said: "I reckon I ought to ax ye pardon, he said in a low voice. "Ye see, my gun's plumb gone."

"You had it only last night," Dale said. "Did it disappear?"

"Well, I shore got to be kept on my toes, y'know. I've seed ye fight. You can work the coal."

He looked toward the closed inner door and called, "Oh, Addie; you and the boys can come back now."

Out of the night a face appeared at one of the small windows. It was a feminine face and handsome rather than pretty. Two slender, sunburned hands gripped the window-ledge nervously. The face pressed closer to the glass, then disappeared. Soon afterward the outer door of the guest's room opened, and Ben Littleford's daughter entered. Her skirts were dripping wet.

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